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Dons back call to bring back ISA

THE Internal Security Act (ISA) should be brought back, if necessary under a new name, as there appears to be widespread public support for a strong preventive law.

Universiti Utara Malaysia's College of Law and International Relations dean Prof Dr Ahmad Marthada Mohamed said such a preventive law was necessary and timely.

He disagreed with the views expressed by veteran political scientist Dr Chandra Muzaffar, who said ISA should not be brought back as it may trigger anger and bitterness of the communal worldview.

"ISA is needed. Just look at the recent scenario that touched on the sensitivities of other religions that had triggered a polemic between Muslims and Christians. This could destabilise the nation as well as disrupt harmony in the

country," he told *The Mole*.

"We need ISA to handle extremism that can destabilise the country."

Ahmad Marthada said recent issues like the deviant Tuhan Harun sect, the spread of Syiah teachings and religious tensions between Muslims and Christians were wreaking havoc among Malaysians.

"This has frightened the public and if the government doesn't act, more people will become victims and the public will become more afraid in their own country," he said.

He said "those concerned" should also educate the public on the effectiveness of a strong preventive law like the ISA in fighting crime, particularly organised crime and deviationist teaching in the country".

"The purpose of the law is not to victimise people but to safeguard the country," he said.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Associate Prof Dr Shamsul Adabi Mamat said a new preventive law should have a fresh name to avoid negative perceptions.

"ISA has been ridiculed and painted with much negativity. The government will face strong opposition to this move with questions on its integrity and such but the peace, safety and security of this country should be of paramount importance," he said.

"The sole purpose of this move must be to ensure the safety of the rakyat. Many of us don't understand that well."

Shamsul Adabi said he supported former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's call to bring back the ISA to control actions of extremist minorities that undermined the country's stability.